



The President's Daily Brief

11 June 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Military activity increased sharply over the weekend, as both sides jockeyed for position in anticipation of new cease-fire arrangements. The Communists have not yet launched a general "land-grab" campaign, as they did last January, but there are persistent reports that such an eleventh-hour effort is planned.

Most of the current activity is in the delta, with fighting reported in almost every province. Sharp fighting persists in Chuong Thien and Dinh Tuong provinces, where both sides are conducting spoiling operations close to long-established Communist base areas.

North of Saigon, government defenders at An Loc, with the help of heavy air and artillery support, repulsed a tank-led Communist attack on June 9. The Communists also shelled both An Loc and Lai Khe and have thwarted government efforts to reopen Routes 13 and 1A.

In Kontum Province, North Vietnamese troops occupied a village near the provincial capital following a dispirited defense by government territorial forces. Military Region 2 commander General Toan sent two battalions of regulars to the area and has ordered air strikes against Communist artillery positions. Along the coast, the North Vietnamese have harassed outlying positions in Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai provinces and pushed back a government ranger unit in Quang Nam.

Fighting in many portions of the northern provinces appears to have resulted from government operations that, in some instances, are being conducted in territory tacitly left under Viet Cong control for several years. Communist actions in this area may be aimed at securing staging areas closer to the populous coastal zone.

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VENEZUELA-CUBA-OAS

Venezuela is mounting a major diplomatic effort to relax OAS restrictions against Cuba and may seek a special session of the OAS Permanent Council in Washington this week to consider the matter.

The initiative is unlikely to muster the two-thirds vote required to lift the restrictions, but any vote at this time would be closer than it was last year when Peru tested the issue. Venezuela could conceivably achieve a simple majority favoring its initiative, which would leave each member country free to make its one decision on the application of sanctions against Cuba.

The Venezuelan effort is motivated primarily by domestic political considerations. President Caldera apparently believes the lifting of sanctions is popular among Venezuelan voters and that the initiative would strengthen his party's position in the presidential elections scheduled for December.

Regardless of the outcome, Venezuela will probably move fairly soon to re-establish diplomatic and commercial relations with Cuba. This, together with a similar move by Argentina last month, will be interpreted by Havana as further proof that its attempts to widen the gap between the US and Latin America are succeeding.

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